



Committee on Student Fees and Budget Review

UNIT REPORT: STUDENT LEARNING CENTER

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Introduction to the Unit

The Student Learning Center (SLC), located in the Caesar Chavez Center, is a location where students can go to receive tutoring, engage in group-study sessions, and get any needed assistance with their academic coursework. There is a staff of 21 professionals who teach courses on campus and lead weekly training seminars for the 250-300 tutors who work more directly with students. The program is organized around disciplines, and is pushing for a more transformative rather than transactional teaching philosophy. The SLC also manages the Summer Bridge Program, the Leadership Honor Society and serves as a liaison to the DeCal program.

The Student Learning Center serves about 7,100 unique students each year, 50% of whom are international students. 37% of all undergraduate students use the SLC. The program also helps transfer students adjust to the increased workload of upper division classes, in addition to its primary target sophomore and freshmen student populations. Those seeking academic assistance can either sign up for group study sessions taught by a group leader – this can be seen as an extended discussion section of a particular class – or for independent drop-in tutoring for a more personal meeting.

The budget for the 2013-2014 year was \$1.729M. Over the past 13 years the program has net lost over \$800K as a result of budget cuts. This year's budget will be \$1.477M. The Student Services Fee accounts for approximately \$400K-\$500K which is restricted to tutorial services, drop-in study groups, and workshops.

Unit Director Meeting Findings

Despite budgetary cuts and restraints over the past decade, the SLC has not seen much of a reduction of services. In the past few years, the influx of international students, who are more likely to use the SLC to start with, has increased the demand for summer bridge programs and general language services at the SLC. Being a service provider, most of the expenditures are allotted to payroll for tutors and professionals. The tutors are unionized and must be paid in accordance with the Union's request, which continues to increase year-to-year with salary inflation.

The SLC is having difficulty hiring new professionals due to high salary and costly benefits expectations. Last year the SLC won a \$30K national collegial prize for quality of education provided. With an additional increase in Student Services Fees, the SLC would look to initiate a creative writing program to help students move away from the 'prescriptive' writing experience toward a more organic form. The SLC is also looking for ways to create a more cutting-edge and global learning experience that does not simply inform students but creates a learning environment that goes beyond the classroom.

Compliance with Guidelines

The SSF guidelines indicate that the student services fee is intended for use for, but not limited to: services related to psychological health and well-being of students, social and recreational programs, services related to campus life and community, and career support.

The SLC is within the Student Services Fee guidelines as it is complementary to, but not part of, the core instructional program. The SLC is a program created intentionally outside of the academic lecture halls to support students who need extra help. This program is not part of any educational department or major on campus and although it does teach students course material – it is an external unit that provides counseling and tutoring as an extra service to students.

Preliminary Recommendations

Our recommendation is that the SLC receive sustained funding from the Student Services Fee. The Center has been performing well, and as noted by Director Cara Stanley, budget cuts would not necessarily change the impact and effectiveness of the program. However, individual tutoring services would be substituted for group tutoring to accommodate for such a change. The SLC is currently dealing with an influx of international students and thus should not see budgetary cuts. The center has proven its ability to operate through changing financial climates, and should see a maintained level of funding from the SSF.